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Although extracurricular classes in religion are now permitted, the local Communist authorities not only wage intensive anti-religious and anti-Church propaganda against them, but they also try to use every means of coercion to keep parents from sending their children to these classes.

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Since the 1948-49 wave of persecution, ecclesiastical authorities have been forced to compromise; they have agreed to sign acts of loyalty and to tolerate the government sponsored "peace-priest" movement. Nevertheless, in the rural areas, resistance to Communism is still centered around the local church. In spite of the official attitude, there are no signs yet to indicate a relaxation of the devotion or the stubborn adherence to the church of the traditionally pious Magyar peasants — men and women alike.

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Among the peasantry, the teaching of the basic tenets of religion to the child has been traditionally the mother's duty, and the growing child can observe, at home, the example of his elders. Meals, important activities and everyday labor are always introduced and followed by a short prayer. At the table, the sign of the cross accompanies the cutting of the fresh loaf of bread. When church bells ring, the women cross themselves and men remove their hats. The Catholic home always displays religious pictures and a font; Protestants ornament the main living room with the family Bible.

778 795 at least a dozen other local churches, e.g. Szeged-Alsóváros and Hajós, which attract the flock not only of the village but also of the neighboring regions on account of certain powers that are attributed to their saints.

[788] The pious peasants often plant crosses at the crossroads and at the boundaries of their villages; when they pass by, they sign themselves with the cross. Larger towns feature calvaries (kálvária), open air representations of Christ's sufferings which are visited by the faithful especially during Lent.

576 771 The sayings common among the peasantry also reveal their deep religiousness. Greetings, for example, of the jó napot 'good day' type are always returned in the country with adjon Isten 'may God grant you.' The greeting Dicsértessék a Jésus Krisztus - Mindörökké, amen is very common among the Catholic peasants; it is of purely ecclesiastical origin, a direct translation of Laudetur I. Ch. - In aeternum, amen. Moreover, all of the more elaborate types of greetings refer to God and are actually derived from blessings.

796 795 Processions are common among the Catholics. On major holidays, especially on Easter and Corpus Christi Day, the clergy and the faithful march through the main streets of the town, carrying square gonfalons with pictures of saints, candles and the Holy Sacrament, singing hymns and praying. Before harvest time, a procession goes out to the fields where the blessing of the crops takes place with the assistance of the whole village. Processions

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369 In the cities, meals are served in the dining room or, more rarely, in the kitchen. In rural areas, the rooms of the houses are used for this purpose only on special occasions, such as Christmas or a wedding; otherwise, meals are eaten on the porch or in the yard. In the cities the three main meals are at 7:00 A.M., 2:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M., the afternoon meal being the most important. Farmers eat, depending upon the season, three or more times, at 5:00 A.M., 12:00 noon and 7:00 P.M. Their main meal is taken in the evening.

[188] Among the numerous ancient customs connected with meal time, some still appear to be generally alive: the grace before and after the meal, the cutting of the homemade loaf of bread by the master of [562] the house, the silence observed around the table. In the Palóc region even today only the men sit at the table, while the women eat standing, unless they are nursing an infant.

146 Nutritional status. As for the nutritional status of the Magyar peasants, very little precise data are available, and there are practically none on food consumption. Relying on reports from refugees and evaluating articles published by the Hungarian daily press, one could roughly estimate the nutritional status of the

252 required, and each person brings his or her own implement. They cannot turn up with any odd one in such a gathering, so each person brings proudly a decorated one, just as girls only take to the spinnery the distaffs which their lovers have so beautifully carved.

773 The great importance and distinction of bread makes it necessary that it shall be duly honoured when still in the form of wheat, all the more so as the Creator himself carved man's face on every ripe grain. According to a Legend, when God had turned man out of the Garden of Eden, he ordered him to search for the grain bearing his image, to grow it and work for it with the sweat of his brow, «because, although he had heard that it would mean death, he forgot and ate of the forbidden fruit».

• 788 The blessing of the wheat crop by the Church, which takes place on the day of Saint Mark, has therefore a great importance and meaning in Hungarian life. It is at the end of April, there is hope of life and the young crops are green like untouched promises. The people go in procession to the chosen wheat field where, under God's free sky, the future bread is blessed. Each person returns to his home with one ear from the field which has been blessed, — with a promise of new hope. It is blessed, so that «fog shall not strangle, hail shall not destroy, storm shall not trample, fire shall not consume the only hope of the poor». Later on the Calvinists at their communion thank God with fresh bread for having watched the growth of the crops. In some districts ears picked from the blessed field are supposed to have a healing, increasing or magic effect, and therefore they are greatly esteemed.

241 But let us get down to work! It is Peter and Paul's
527 day, the stalk of the wheat is torn, and when the wind touches it, it undulates in golden waves. Poor people do the reaping themselves, helped by their family. Those